

## "Step it up": Increasing LGBTQ+ inclusivity in and out of class

*"Y'all are not here for us. Step it up."*  
--A queer identifying student's write-in response

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1

## Agenda

- Framework
- Research summary
- Listen, Reflect, Step it Up activity
  - Heads up, difficult content: quotes from students about their experiences with harassment and discrimination on campus. Student reference specific slurs and physical attacks they have experienced on campus
- Conclusion and large group discussion

2

## How can we create more supportive and inclusive higher education environments for LGBTQ+ students (and others!)?

### Supportive Campus Environment

- Institution emphasizes commitment to diversity and providing resources needed for success in a multicultural world
- Ensuring that you are not stigmatized because of your identity
- Creating an overall sense of community among students

### Culturally Engaging Courses

- Exploring your own and others' backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, norms and experiences
- Developing skills to work with people from various backgrounds, and discussing issues of equity and privilege

### Representation

- Compositional diversity: how proportionally represented students are in their discipline
- Racial/ethnic identification, first-generation status, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability status

BrckaLorenz, A., Haeger, H., & Pridde, C. (2019). An examination of inclusivity and support for diversity in STEM fields. Paper presented at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Canada.

Today's study!

3

## Background

- Although institutional climates may be improving for LGBTQ+ students, heterosexism still rules.
- Perceptions of climate can impact academic success, social integration, well-being, and identity development.
  - Classrooms and curricular experiences are a microcosm of the larger school experience.
- Culturally engaging pedagogies can help to shape positive experiences for minoritized individuals.
  - Overlooking students' identities, such as their sexuality, can render LGBTQ+ issues invisible.
  - LGBTQ+ students are more likely to leave fields that focus on identity-neutral practices

4

## Data & Respondents

### Data

- 2017 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement
  - First-year and senior participation in educationally effective activities at four-year institutions
- 30 institutions received special set focused on LGBTQ+ issues

### Respondents

- 13,000+ respondents
- 58% seniors
- 12% LGBTQ+
- Largest majors
  - Business (17%)
  - Social Sciences (14%)
  - Arts & Humanities (13%)

5

## Research Questions

Our research questions:

1. How do perceptions of the curricular inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues differ by students' sexual orientation and major?
  - t-tests, ANOVAs, Cohen's *d* effect sizes
2. How do perceptions of the curricular inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues relate to other forms of engagement for both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ students?
  - OLS regression, engagement as outcome, separate models for LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ students, controlling for major and institution

What can we learn from student write-ins: "Please share any reflections or experiences regarding LGBTQ+ issues at your institution."

- Iterative inductive and deductive coding

6

## Measures

### Special item set

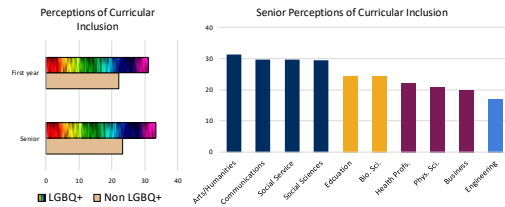
- How often are LGBTQ+ issues discussed in your courses?
- How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your understanding of LGBTQ+ issues?
- How comfortable do you feel bringing up LGBTQ+ issues in class?
- How often do you have discussions with LGBTQ+ people outside of class?
- How often do you discuss LGBTQ+ issues outside of class?

### Core Engagement

- Higher-Order Learning
- Reflective & Integrative Learning
- Collaborative Learning
- Discussions with Diverse Others
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Quality of Interactions
- Supportive Environment
- Perceived Gains

7

## Results: How do perceptions of the curricular inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues differ by students' sexual orientation and major?



8

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### Relationships between Engagement and LGBTQ+ Inclusion

	LGBTQ+		Non-LGBTQ+	
	First-Year	Senior	First-Year	Senior
Higher-Order Learning	++	+	+	+
Reflective & Integrative Learning	++	++	++	++
Collaborative Learning	+	+	+	+
Discussions with Diverse Others	+	++	++	++
Student-Faculty Interaction	+	++	+	++
Quality of Interactions	+	+	+	+
Supportive Environment	++	++	++	++
Perceived Gains	++	++	++	++

+ d = .1 is small, ++ d = .3 is medium

9

## So What?

- LGBTQ+ curricular inclusion varies greatly by discipline, STEM fields are particularly disconnected
- LGBTQ+ curricular inclusion is positively related to engagement for both LGBTQ+ *and* non-LGBTQ+ students, all students can benefit
- Pedagogical recommendations
  - Don't reinforce heteronormativity
  - Draw attention to diverse authors/theorists/contributors to the field/etc.,
  - Provide examples that respect and promote diversity
  - Remember course experiences impact socialization into disciplines
  - Reflective & Integrative Learning could be key

10

## Listening to Students

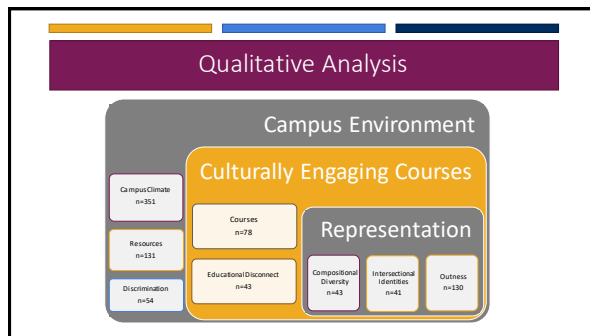
- Go to one of the stations around the room and looks at the quotes from students
  - What do you notice?
  - How could you organize or make sense of these quotes?

11

## Step it Up

- What themes stand out or resonate with you?
- How do these connect with your experiences and/or your campus?
- In light these responses, the presented research and your own experiences:
  - What could you do to better support LGBTQ+ students on your campus?
  - How could your revision your campus to be a more inclusive space?
  - What would it take to make those changes

12

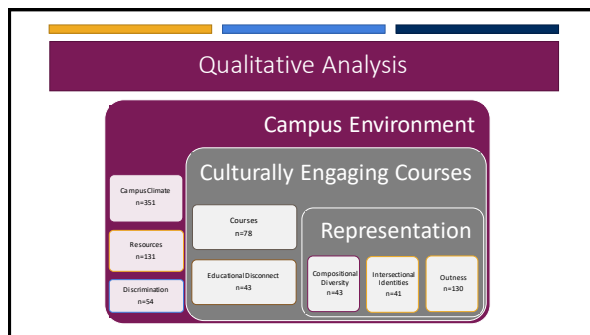


13

### Disconnect from the Curriculum

- “Largely, aside from the typical prejudice and microaggressions that accompany navigating heteronormative spaces as a queer person, I would say there’s a lack of representation and intersectionality of LGBTQ+ issues and history across all courses I have taken...I wish there would have been a greater inclusion and representation of LGBTQ+ voices in my education.”
- “I’m only taking upper level biology courses...LGBTQ+ topics rarely pop up in class because of this.”
- “Mostly LGBTQ+ issues don’t get brought up, but when they do, it’s always with language and tone that suggests the professor is assuming none of the students in the class is on the LGBTQ+ spectrum. It’s uncomfortable and isolating, but bearable enough.”

14



15

### Engagement in a Bubble

- “I think that while we have a solid LGBTQ+ community here, it’s almost like we exist as a bubble separate from the rest of the campus community. Likewise, LGBTQ+ people not actively in the community feel alienated because those two social worlds rarely intersect.”
- “As an openly gay person on this campus, **I have been accepted and welcomed in certain environments. However, I have been verbally and physically attacked for my sexual orientation on this campus.**”
- “It is refreshing to have faculty who are not only willing to discuss LGBTQ+ issues, but also incorporate them into their coursework and lectures. Having authority figures that don’t regard the mere existence of LGBTQ+ people as taboo was such a welcome change.”

16

### Full Group Discussion

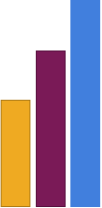
- How do students experience microclimates on campus?
- What are the tensions between fostering safe spaces in a larger, hostile/unsupportive climate?
- How can courses incorporate LGBTQ+ issues in different disciplines, especially in STEM fields?

17

### What’s Next?

- Research needs to continue striving to understand identity with thoughtful attention to how survey or interview questions, particularly demographic-related questions, are framed
- Knowledge of identity terminology is not ubiquitous; institutions should strive to educate students, faculty, and staff on the meaning of identifying terms and the use of inclusive language
- Studies that only focus on sexual orientation (LGBTQ+) should be aware of potential expectations for the inclusion of “T” and should be clear with intentions
- Everyone should reflect more on how diversity expands beyond curricular content!

18



Thanks so much for joining us!

Find our slides and paper as well as other information about NSSE at [nsse.indiana.edu](https://nsse.indiana.edu)

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